3.4 SIDBI has developed a Credit Appraisal and Rating Tool (CART) as well as a Risk Assessment Model (RAM) which PSBs would use.

3.5 The commercial banks (including regional rural banks) with over 67,000 branches will make concerted efforts to provide credit cover on an average to at least 5 **new** tiny, small and medium enterprises at each of their semi urban/urban branches per year.

3.6 Reserve Bank will issue detailed guidelines relating to debt restructuring mechanism so as to ensure restructuring of debt of all eligible small and medium enterprises at terms which are not less favourable than the Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR) mechanism in the banking sector.

3.7 A one-time settlement scheme to apply to small scale NPA accounts in the books of the banks as on March 31, 2004 will be introduced. The scheme will be in force up to March 31, 2006.

3.8 CGTSI will be advised to reduce the one time guarantee fee from 2.5% to 1.5% and PSBs will be advised to reduce annual fee from 0.75% to 0.25% for all (i) loans up to Rs. 2 lakh, (ii) eligible women entrepreneur, and (iii) eligible borrowers located in the North Eastern Region (including Sikkim) and Jammu and Kashmir.

Lowering of excise duty on petroleum products

1415. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to lower the excise and tax on petroleum products;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the reasons for high cost of final petroleum products in the country compared to other countries; and

(d) whether Government have any proposal to minimise the cost of petroleum products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) Pricing of petroleum products

is the subject matter of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. At present there is no proposal under the consideration of the Government to effect any changes in the present excise duty structure and rates of petroleum products. Cost of petroleum products depends upon a number of factors including international prices of petroleum crude.

Investment of pension funds

1416. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since taken a decision about investment of pension funds of the Central Government employees;

(b) whether a decision on foreign equity participation has also been taken; and

(c) if so, the details and present status on both the proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) At present the contribution in respect of the Central Government employees recruited on or after 01-01-2004 are not being invested and are, instead, being credited into the public account at an interest rate of 8%. The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Bill, 2005, which was introduced in Parliament on March 21, 2005, *inter alia*, empowers PFRDA to make regulation, including investment norms for management of contributions and accumulation by pension funds. The Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance for a detailed examination. The Committee submitted their report on July 26, 2005. Certain amendments to Bill as suggested by the Committee are under the Government's consideration.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

Impact of Fringe Benefit Tax on SSI

1417. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to revise Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) rules for helping the SSIs;